



December 29, 2011

Mayor Vincent C. Gray
and Members of the Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

SUBJECT: Library Naming

Dear Mayor Vincent Gray and members of the Council of the District of Columbia:

I write to once again explain the position of the DC Public Library Board of Library Trustees against changing the name of the Bellevue Library. We continue to believe the right thing to do is not interfere with the Library Board's exercise of our legal authority to name this library. And we stand by our action, taken last July, to name it the Bellevue Library, in keeping with the wishes of many neighbors and library supporters.

At the core of mounting frustration toward the DC government held by many of our residents and stakeholders is the belief that our elected officials have failed to follow the very laws they have established in favor of a political goal instead of one that will benefit residents. The current process political officials are using to rename this Ward 8 Library adds to this perception.

A number of things have been said over the past months regarding this re-naming that may have served to shift the focus away from the central issue, which is the lawful process by which a library should be named.

The DC Public Library sponsored a number of community meetings in Ward 8 beginning in September 2010 to engage and involve residents and stakeholders in the process to re-build the Washington Highlands Library. It was at these early meetings that the recommendation was made to re-name this library Bellevue in recognition of the community in which it is located. In December 2010 (prior to the death of Mr. Lockridge) the Friends of the Washington Highlands Library and the Bellevue Civic Association petitioned the Board of Library Trustees to change the name of this library to the Bellevue Neighborhood Library. The chief librarian recommended to the DC Public Library Board of Library Trustees that the Washington Highlands Library become the Bellevue Neighborhood Library on February 17, 2011. The full board considered and voted to accept this recommendation at their scheduled public meeting in July, 2011. This

process is in keeping with the policies and procedures of the DCPL Board of Library Trustees and the laws of the District of Columbia.

During February of 2011, the chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia at the request of the Mayor, introduced legislation to re-name the Washington Highlands Library the William O'Neil Lockridge Memorial Library in honor of William O. Lockridge who recently passed away. On September 21, 2011, the Committee of the Whole held a public hearing on B19-0092, "The William O'Neil Lockridge Memorial Library Designation Act of 2011" and B19-0145, "The William O'Neil Lockridge Way Designation Act of 2011". The First Readings on these bills were scheduled for November 1, 2011. At the conclusion of this hearing, B19-0145, "The William O'Neil Lockridge Way Designation Act of 2011" continued on the path to approval by the Council of the District of Columbia. However, deliberation on B19-0092, "The William O'Neil Lockridge Memorial Library Designation Act of 2011" was "suspended" in order for the Ward 8 community to further consider this matter. The "First Reading" on B19-0092, "The William O'Neil Lockridge Memorial Library Designation Act of 2011" was held on December 6, 2011 and it was determined (by majority vote) that the library should be named the William O'Neil Lockridge Memorial Library at Bellevue. Some saw the inclusion of "Bellevue" as a compromise. In fact, nearly all of the libraries named for individuals include the neighborhood name as well, (e.g. Watha T Daniel/Shaw Library).

We understand that the DC Council has authority to name public buildings. However, by law "DCMR 19 sec. 808.1 Library Buildings shall be named by action of the Board of Library Trustees upon written recommendation of the Director of the Public Library" also has this authority. With the re-naming of the Benning Library to the Dorothy Irene Height Library, the Board of Library Trustees confirmed the action of DC Council on this matter. In our letter to the chair of the DC Council, we noted that this was an exception to the library Board's policy (and DC law).

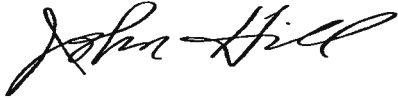
A number of libraries are named after individuals. The individuals so honored were very involved in the growth and development of libraries or undeniably worthy of distinction due to their life's work and esteem.

Today, there are 2 public places named in honor of William O'Neil Lockridge in Ward 8. The Bellevue library will constitute the 3rd public space/place so named. This is contrary to current DC law. Additionally, this legislation was introduced within 90 days of the passing of Mr. Lockridge. This is also contrary to current DC law. We believe the policies and laws regarding naming libraries after neighborhoods rather than individuals, limiting the number of public places/spaces bearing an individual's name, and a 2 year period before naming a public place/space after an individual are sound and reasonable.

The residents and stakeholders of the District of Columbia have an expectation that their voices will be heard and that established laws and procedures will be followed. We fully expect boards

and commissions, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, civic associations, organized "Friends" groups and etc., will not be ignored for what amounts to political considerations. As elected officials you can restore integrity and principles by endorsing and supporting the naming of this library, the Bellevue Library. It is not too late to do the right thing in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "H".

John Hill
President
Board of Library Trustees